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Friday, 21 July 2006, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Eliasson ..... (Sweden)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

In the absence of the President, Mr. Diarra (Mali), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Agenda items 117 and 120 (*continued*)

Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): Before giving the floor to the first speaker, I would like to remind members that there are still 33 speakers inscribed on my list. I therefore appeal to members to make their statements as concise as possible, in order that we may be able to exhaust the list of speakers this afternoon.

Mr. Bolton (United States of America): I wish to thank the President for the opportunity to speak to the important issue of Security Council reform and expansion.

The United States supports expansion of the Security Council, but change must be far more than simply change for its own sake. Changes should be designed to increase the effectiveness of the Council in responding to the challenges we face today.

A look at the Council's agenda over the past weeks makes clear the importance to all Member States of a Security Council that is able to respond swiftly, credibly and effectively to threats to international peace and security. On a very practical level, one reason the Council is able to function with at least some efficiency is that its size permits useful and manageable discussions and debates. All Council members are able to engage in debate over the course of a morning or afternoon. Draft resolutions can be worked through line by line within a time frame that allows all members to express their views. That procedure is more complex and time-consuming in United Nations bodies with a larger membership — when members are here.

The expansion of the Security Council must result in at least maintaining, if not increasing, the Council's effectiveness. We believe that the Council would be more effective if Japan — the second largest financial contributor to the United Nations, a strong and vibrant democracy, a defender of human rights and a leading contributor to peacekeeping operations and development worldwide — were a permanent member of the Council.

Over the past year, we do not believe the current proposals before the General Assembly have gained the broad-based support required for adoption and ratification as a Charter amendment. The time and energy expended on this issue over the past year has only hardened positions and increased divisions among members. We are no closer today than we were a year ago to achieving the broad consensus necessary to adopt and ratify a Charter amendment.

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The time may therefore be right to move beyond these stalemated proposals. To get to a model for expansion that commends the broad support necessary, some of the key actors in the current debate will have to find new ways of looking at the issue.

As to the Security Council's working methods, the United States believes strongly that a number of changes are needed to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the Council's work. The United Nations Charter gives the Security Council sole authority over its own working methods. During the past year, the Council has re-energized its Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions to address the issue of the Council's working methods. My Japanese colleague Ambassador Oshima continues to do an excellent job as Chair of that Group. Earlier this week, the Council adopted a series of practices to make the Council's work more transparent. We will continue to participate fully and to support the ongoing efforts of the Working Group in the coming months.

Mr. Kazykhanov (Kazakhstan): First and foremost, I would like to thank the President for convening this meeting and for a good opportunity to discuss the important issue of Security Council reform at a plenary meeting of the General Assembly.

As indicated at the 2005 world summit, Security Council reform is an essential element of our overall effort to reform the United Nations. In that regard, we strongly believe that this sensitive issue should be resolved on the basis of a broad international agreement.

Acknowledging that reform must make the Security Council more representative, effective and accountable to the wider United Nations membership, Kazakhstan has repeatedly voiced its continued support for expansion of the Council in the categories of both permanent and non-permanent seats. We share the general view that the present composition of the Council does not sufficiently reflect contemporary geopolitical realities.

We are convinced that an expansion of the Security Council that is in accordance with the principle of equitable geographical representation and that takes into account the contribution of the States concerned to the development of the world economy and to global security would serve the interests of many States and would facilitate comprehensive reform of the United Nations.

Kazakhstan attaches great importance to the issue of the working methods and practices of the Security Council. Our delegation fully supports the view that the Council should continue to adapt its working methods in order to make its work more transparent and more democratic so that it can better serve the interests of the entire membership of the Organization. In that context, we welcome the efforts made by the delegations of Costa Rica, Jordan, Liechtenstein, Singapore and Switzerland. Their proposals on the Council's working methods deserve our careful examination.

We also welcome the work being done by the Security Council's Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, which includes efforts to enhance the efficiency and transparency of the Council's work as well as to ensure stronger interaction and dialogue with the general United Nations membership.

Kazakhstan will continue to support and work closely with the President and other members in order to achieve the reform to which we aspire in the structure of the Security Council and its working methods. We strongly believe that reform of the Council is needed to make it more transparent, democratic and efficient.

Mr. Sen (India): I thank the President for convening this meeting. I am grateful for this opportunity — and for the very pleasant coincidence that I am speaking when you, Ambassador Diarra, are in the Chair once again, because you also happened to chair the last such debate in which I spoke (see A/60/PV.50). I think that we had a very rich and constructive debate yesterday, in terms of what you had asked for. Therefore, I will not go over those arguments or the arguments of the past or fight old battles, because that would only exhaust the listeners in this Hall, without really exhausting the subject. So, I will try to address reform of the Security Council in terms of the current conjuncture, the lessons of the United Nations reform process so far, the problems created by the Security Council and, flowing from that, what we see as the way ahead.

The Security Council, in our view, has not been able to effectively address problems related to peace and security, including those in the Middle East at this time. Therefore, it must focus fully on its Charter duty to effectively address such problems and to do well

what it is supposed to do rather than doing something that the Charter does not mandate it to do. Here, I think, the advice of the Bible is fully consonant with the Charter, because it says that it is better to see the beam in your own eye than to see the mote in your neighbour's eye. I believe that that is very useful as a general principle.

As for the United Nations itself, we find that its problems are not fewer than before, but rather greater, because the divide between the five permanent members and the rest is greater, the North-South divide is more profound and the imbalance between the General Assembly and the Security Council is sharper. So there is no real progress in that respect, given the current correlation of power.

This is something that is noticeable not only to us: well-informed and authoritative observers outside the United Nations have also clearly seen it. To cite an example, the high-level parliamentary delegation that visited the United Nations on 26 and 27 June wrote a report that was circulated by the Inter-Parliamentary Union on 10 July. The report says clearly that the Security Council has arrogated to itself far more power vis-à-vis the General Assembly than is warranted by the Charter. It concludes that until the Security Council is changed, it is impossible to foresee that the United Nations will truly change. It is no accident or coincidence that the revitalization of the General Assembly has been frustrated together with reform of the Security Council.

Some members of the Security Council, in our view, are the last followers of Francis Fukuyama, who, as we know, wrote "The End of History and the Last Man". He abandoned the idea of the end of history in a subsequent book, but they are still carrying that flag, long after he put it down. They remain opposed to a dispersal of quotas within the International Monetary Fund, to the addition of new permanent Security Council members — or at least to the idea of six new permanent members — and to the Council proffering more than one candidate for the post of Secretary-General to the General Assembly for its approval. In fact, this end-of-history syndrome is so acute that it is as if much of what has happened since 1945 — the enormous increase in United Nations membership, the triumphs of the anti-colonial and anti-apartheid struggles, the greater equality, the expansion of freedom — had never taken place, that history had stopped. Multilateralism remains a word; plurilateralism remains the reality. In fact, the logic seems to be that if the majority is not happy with that, so much the worse for the majority.

In yesterday's debate, one of my dear friends very pertinently raised the issue of ownership. I believe that ownership is extremely important. But where I respectfully disagree is here: we should not confuse the substance, which is the distribution of power, with the machinery or the method. Ownership is not a matter of consensus, which is only the machinery. If ownership indeed were a matter purely of consensus, then in that case in December 2005 we imposed the spending cap by consensus. Do we therefore really have a sense of ownership about the spending cap, or do we rightly believe — most of us, at any rate — that this is some kind of turnip ghost from an aborted Halloween party, a scarecrow that, fortunately, failed to scare and was therefore given a decent burial?

Take also the case of the Peacebuilding Commission. We all know that resolution 60/180, on the Peacebuilding Commission, was, again, passed by consensus in the General Assembly. But did that facilitate the strengthening of the United Nations and equitable geographical distribution, or indeed rapid operationalization of the Peacebuilding Commission? The Peacebuilding Commission is a very important case in point, for here we have the Security Council taking refuge in a technical legality while illegally going against the general will of the General Assembly as reflected in its consensus resolution. Very few remember that, quite correctly, the use of the definite article, "the", was specifically opposed by the General Assembly in the discussions, because it was felt, quite rightly, that "the" would mean that the permanent members would all automatically be members of the Peacebuilding Commission.

That reminds me of a couple of lines from Lord Byron: "How strange the mind, that very fiery particle, Should let itself be snuffed out by an article". But that is really what happened: it was snuffed out by an article. The Security Council thus also instituted a regime of dualism, by at the same time making the Commission subsidiary to the Security Council and ensuring that those who are on the Council's agenda would not, without its approval, be able to approach the Peacebuilding Commission for any assistance. That vitiated the capacity of the Peacebuilding Commission, at its very origin, both to give optimal advice and to have optimal functioning.

I would therefore say that the question of ownership is not, as we have seen, a question of the machinery, of arriving at something through absolute consensus or unanimity. It is a question of the distribution power, a question of the limitation on arbitrary power. That is the question that has to be resolved through any reform of the Security Council.

The same body has another member State whose representative made this point yesterday: that we should not increase the number of permanent members, there are already permanent members, they have created problems, so why should we increase the number of permanent members? The whole point is that the only way one can really check arbitrary power is through the election of permanent members, who would then be accountable to the General Assembly and would be held accountable through a stringent review clause or clauses. The same member State that said that in fact had accepted this logic, as well as the logic of equity, when it made a statement, which I remember very accurately.

Its representative referred, at the time of the setting up of the Peacebuilding Commission, to the problems that had attended its birth. The same Member State at that time said that permanent members would be permanently represented. Surely those who put their sons and daughters in harm's way as peacekeepers deserve equal treatment. That is exactly what that member State said. Thus, all we are saying is that the logic that he applied to the Peacebuilding Commission is the same logic that ought to be applied to the Security Council.

As to the conclusion that can be drawn from that, rather than putting it in my own words I will put it in the words of the Secretary-General. The Assembly will forgive my making a very detailed quotation from the Secretary-General's remarks. The Secretary-General said the following in a recorded press conference in Geneva on 22 June:

> "[Member States] should pursue Security Council reform because it is part of the reasons why we have tensions in the Organization today .... [Quite] a lot of members feel that ... we cannot continue to have a situation where the power base is perceived to be controlled by a limited number of five Member States.
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> "[E]ven] when you talk of management reform, it becomes a question of power struggle. I mean, people see it in terms of power — which bloc is gaining, which is going to lose. And of course, this perception of a power struggle was not helped by the attitude of the Permanent Five because when we set up the Peacebuilding Commission, they insisted that they should be reserved five seats, and they got them. And of course, when we started talking about the Human Rights Council, a similar demand was made, the membership reacted and they pulled back."

Yesterday, one of the member States said that the reform of the Security Council should not be a power game. But, as the words of the Secretary-General have just demonstrated, it is really keeping it unreformed that is a power game. Clearly, the logic of the reform process so far inexorably points to the need for a thorough-going reform of the Security Council, an expansion in both the permanent and non-permanent categories and a reform of its working methods. As we have seen, the process of reform has been certainly distorted, vitiated and, in fact, in many ways held back by an absence of reform of the Security Council.

I therefore think that we need to address the fundamental issue, rather than addressing some other issue through a solution that addresses something other than the fundamental issue. The point can be viewed as being analogous to the circulation of blood, which must flow evenly through all organs. When it does not flow through one organ, that organ tends to atrophy. That may be happen to the General Assembly. Hence the vital need for its revitalization. But that attempt has not been very successful thus far. We have therefore contended with attempts at encroachment on the powers of the General Assembly. We have seen — in the debates on procurement, certain aspects of peacekeeping and in thematic debates — that the non-permanent members are not really able to even check or halt, let alone roll back, the process of encroachment. That can only be done through the institutional memory and the strength that comes from permanence.

Hence, also, an interim solution would not address it. I entirely agree with the first speaker this afternoon that we are not here for the sake of reform for reform's sake, like art for art's sake. We are here to undertake reform that will be effective. The process of encroachment can therefore not be checked unless one has the sense of permanence and strength that can

check it. An interim solution cannot possibly provide that.

Similarly, any effectiveness has to be seen in the light of not just an arithmetical figure of low numbers. But, whether one is talking about size or about the goal of limiting and dispersing power, one has to see that all of this is a function of what the aim is.

If the aim is really limitation or dispersal of power — which would mean that the broader membership has power, or greater power, over its own destiny and feels a sense of ownership — then, in that case, it is clear that what we are suggesting would make the Security Council effective. That is because effectiveness would come even if there is a larger number of permanent members, because that would mean more optimal decisions — decisions that are not taken under any kind of bilateral pressure or other form of coercion. Therefore, with such decisions, the Security Council would not be able to encroach, or, at least, not be able to encroach to the same extent. That is what we mean by efficiency and effectiveness — not some kind of political Darwinism which is put forward under the guise of effectiveness.

Let us also consider — since we are on the subject of encroachment — the governance and the flexibility proposals that were made to the General Assembly. That was an attempt to refashion the General Assembly in the image of the Security Council — that is, decision-making and dominance by a charmed circle. Fortunately, it did not succeed, because otherwise the dominance of the Council would have been extended from the Secretariat to the General Assembly itself, by making it irrelevant.

Therefore, the kind of choice offered by the Security Council or by the powerful to the General Assembly can be summed up, I think, in the words of American humorist Woody Allen, who said that we are at a fork in the road, and that one part leads to absolute helplessness and despair and the other to total extinction. I hope the Assembly will have the wisdom to make the right choice.

We submit that, if we are going to get out of this, it cannot be through only a reform of the working methods. Such reform is important, and we therefore welcome the Small Five (S-5) proposal as an important contribution to this debate. The S-5 explanatory memorandum was circulated on 14 July — a very historic date. But that proposal reminded me of something said by Byron, to whom I referred earlier. Let me paraphrase him by saying that the S-5 is explaining metaphysics to the nation; I wish they would explain their explanation. Indeed, in both the explanatory memorandum and the remarks made by many of the speakers from the S-5, the point was made that the working methods concern everyone, whereas the enlargement concerns only a few. However, the point is that one cannot really have either new or enduring working methods without enlargement; therefore enlargement also concerns all, and not just a few.

What is more, it will not be possible — as I have said — to have fundamental stability of these working methods through purely a reform of the working methods themselves. We have seen this already in the case of the annual reports of the Security Council, where I think all are in agreement that there was a flash in the pan, a brief Indian summer, some improvement, and then a falling back once again to the bad or the good old ways, and those reports basically went back, or even further back, to what the earlier ones used to be.

One of the speakers yesterday referred to a very important resolution — resolution 267 (III) of 14 April 1949, if I am not mistaken. That resolution is indeed very important. However, let us look in some detail at the resolution itself. It was, as we know, adopted by the General Assembly on the report of the ad hoc Political Committee on working methods in 1949. The resolution says — and here I am quoting from memory — that the functions entrusted to the Security Council should be such as to exclude the application of the principle of unanimity of the permanent members — in other words, restrictions on the right of veto.

Similarly, it also states that the General Assembly should be able to make recommendations on matters that are being discussed in the Security Council, and that the Council should give access to non-members of the Security Council to the records of its private meetings. In addition, it states that the troop-contributing countries, and these are all quotations from that resolution, should similarly take part in decision-making — mind you, not in debates, but in decision-making — on the employment of troops from such countries.

Therefore I agree with Member States that what has been done in the Security Council today is totally inadequate and not enduring. But the 1949 resolution, in some respects, goes even further than the S-5 resolution, and therefore the more important question to be asked is: Why is it that these working methods have not really succeeded when they were thought of as early as 1949? The answer, again, is very simple. It is because, unless there are permanent members that are committed to these new working methods and are held accountable, through a review clause, to them, these methods cannot really be applied.

Nevertheless, I think that there is a great deal, in terms of commonality, between the working methods that we have proposed in the text submitted by the group of four and the working methods in the S-5 resolution. So, through a process of consultation, a lot can be done in terms of creating synergy and a common understanding.

I believe also that the role of the small States is very important. The Permanent Representative of Singapore has already demonstrated quite clearly, succinctly and superbly that any semi-permanent membership would be devastating for the federation of small States that he chairs — the 100 small States. Therefore, it is important that the small States take part in the day-to-day functioning of the subsidiary bodies of the Security Council, because more than 80 countries — half the membership — have never served on the Security Council. Most of the small States would not get a chance to do so more often than once every 40 years. Therefore both reform of the working methods and the taking of some members out of this competition, through our proposal, would ensure a place for the small States in the day-to-day life of the Organization.

My time is more or less up, but, before concluding, I should like to make a final point, which is that the greatest encroachment of the Security Council is in the sphere of law-making itself. In the case of law-making, for instance, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) has said that the Security Council was right to set up the ICTY in terms of Article 39. However, this is slightly untenable, because the Charter has not conferred any judicial powers on the Security Council. Therefore, in terms of Article 29, the Security Council cannot give judicial powers to any subsidiary body, even if it has the power to set up a subsidiary body.

The Tribunal thus forgot the very important legal principle — my Latin is not perhaps as good as that of my colleague from the United Kingdom, who is sitting opposite me — but the legal principle is, if I remember correctly, *nemo dit quod non habet*, which means that one cannot give what one does not have.

Therefore, if we are to have a body where there would be a limitation on an arbitrary power and a dispersal of power which would give a sense of ownership to the broader membership and the belief that their destiny is in their own hands, and if we are to have a body where coercive diplomacy, arbitrary power, encroachment, lawmaking and setting norms would be a thing of the past, then it is important for us to look at an expansion of the permanent and non-permanent membership and an improvement of the working methods. These must go together, because by separating them, we dilute, divide and disperse the substance.

Finally, therefore, I would say that we require a process of consultations, as many speakers have also hinted at and as some have stated outright. We are not for any kind of arithmetical figure here, because if you look at pure arithmetic, it would not be true to say what one of the speakers said: that there is no broad majority behind the proposal. Even if you look at those who spoke yesterday, 38 out of the 50 speakers spoke in favour of the expansion of both the permanent and the non-permanent categories, besides an improvement in working methods.

But we are not going by arithmetic. We are in favour of a broad agreement, a broad-based approach. Clearly, that has to be done step by step. The first step would have to be that those whose proposals are already on the table — proposals which, as I have demonstrated, are not mutually incompatible — namely, the African Union, the G-4 and the S-5 — should enter into a process of detailed consultation among themselves. We can then extend this process of consultation wider afield before we come to a conclusion.

Mr. Mavroyiannis (Cyprus): At the outset, I would like to thank the President for convening this debate. We consider the maintenance of a constructive dialogue to be useful even on those issues where stark differences of opinion remain and where a bridging of the gap is not yet within reach. Having substantially advanced in many other areas of reform of the United

Nations, we have reached a point where due attention should be given to reforming the Security Council, in terms of both its structure and its working methods.

Established as the primary instrument of the international community for the maintenance of international peace and security and as the corollary to the prohibition of use of force in international relations, which was the major achievement of the Charter, the Security Council needs, in the face of contemporary challenges, to preserve and continue to ensure its ability to adequately fulfil its crucial role. We need, therefore, in the light of past experience and in assessing prospective needs, to decide what transformation or adjustments might be necessary in the Council's composition, structure, working methods and place within the United Nations system. This overhaul needs to be far-reaching and must be based purely on substantive criteria with a view to increasing collective security and effective multilateralism, which is the only credible and promising alternative the international community has found to the rule of might.

In this regard, it should be recalled that it is the effectiveness of the Security Council in maintaining or restoring international peace and security that is the primary source of its legitimacy. The drafters of the Charter in San Francisco were fully aware that this unique organ could not be fully democratic and that its representativeness was primarily linked to the existing power balance and not to the international community as a whole. It was thus this teleological justification that was, and still is, the Council's main source of legitimacy. But it is not the only one.

The Council has to fulfil its responsibility in accordance with international legality. That is a fundamental prerequisite for adherence to the system by the international community of States. Furthermore, beyond balanced representation of the realities of political, economic and military power, the Council also needs a more equitable representation of the international community as a whole in its multidimensional, geographical, cultural and other diversity. Necessary elements of the reform process include enhanced relevance to modern challenges, transparency, accountability, further involvement of relevant stakeholders and of States concerned and ensuring that local realities are duly factored into the decisions. Uniform standards, fairness, equal treatment and credibility are also significant parameters of a successful Security Council responding to the expectations of humanity.

Based on those considerations, we need to go beyond the issue of the respective functions and competencies of the principal organs and adopt an integrated approach, taking into account the interdependence of the issues and the purposes of the actions of the United Nations. We should reflect on the issues, not in terms of powers and competencies and the marking of respective territories, but in terms of partnership, complementarity, synergy and contribution to the achievement of the goals of the Organization through a dynamic and interactive approach.

For us legitimacy is the key word. We previously mentioned it with regard to the structure and action of the Council. It also applies to the Council's working methods and to the way the reform process could move forward. Legitimacy will also be the arbiter of the debate between "wide consensus" and "vote". The approach of the reform process should not remain entrenched in controversy, and the reasonable basis of the course of action that will prevail should not be subsequently challenged.

The question of the reform of the Security Council has been discussed for many years now at various levels and in various formats. In the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1), reform and expansion of the Security Council appear as an essential element in the effort to render the United Nations more relevant to today's world realities and challenges. Although it has not proven possible to reach agreement so far, the three draft resolutions that have been submitted have crystallized the debate and reflect major stakes, interests, concerns and visions of Member States. We also take note with interest, as a significant first step induced by the momentum this question has recently gathered, of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2006/507) presenting the results of the work of the Council's Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. We would also like to make special mention of the very interesting ideas, interesting at least from the perspective of smaller States, contained in the draft resolution (A/60/L.49) submitted by the group of five small nations on the working methods of the Council.

In concluding, I would like to express the hope that, having now before us all the necessary elements

for reflection on the central topic of Security Council reform, we will manage to move the process forward, to the benefit of the international community as a whole.

Mr. Hamidon (Malaysia): It is with great pleasure, Sir, that we see you chairing our deliberations today. It has been exactly three months since we last met in the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform on this same agenda item. Although we had a fruitful exchange in that forum, we do not believe that there have been any significant changes since then on reform of the Security Council.

In this regard, we wish to reinforce the view that no reform of the United Nations would be complete without the reform of the Security Council. The Security Council needs to be reformed in a comprehensive manner, in terms both of its working methods and of expansion of its membership to make it more legitimate, inclusive, representative and transparent. The position of Member States on this issue is well known to all. However, we are dismayed by the lack of political will and the selectivity in addressing the various aspects of the reforms. There appears to be a push in some areas, while there is a lack of interest in other areas, particularly those involving the Security Council.

While expanding Security Council membership is conceivable, at least on paper, the reality is that it will be a difficult process because of the required amendment to the Charter. Moreover, the various changes under consideration would undoubtedly improve the Council's legitimacy, but certainly not its effectiveness. Therefore, the best hope for meaningful change in the Security Council lies in reinforcing pragmatic adaptations in working methods and in exploring new ones. While we would like to see progress in overall reform of the Security Council, the discussion on its working methods should not be linked to discussion on Council expansion. We should proceed with the areas where we can make progress, as reform is an evolution and an ongoing process.

We have seen the attempt of the group of five small nations — the "Small Five" (S-5) — to piece together the fruits of the discussions of the Working Group into a resolution. The S-5 continues to provide good justifications as to why its draft resolution, as contained in document A/60/L.49, should be adopted.

As we have indicated in our previous statements, Malaysia supports the draft resolution in principle. However, we would have preferred a stronger formulation on the use of the veto. Malaysia has always advocated the elimination of the veto in conformity with the principle of sovereign equality as envisaged in the Charter. The exercise of the veto by the permanent members of the Security Council should be regulated so as to prohibit the unjust use of power at the sole discretion of its holder to overrule the wishes of the majority. The text as it currently stands does not adequately address the question of the veto. Based on current practice, this explanation can be found in the provisional verbatim records of the Security Council, which are circulated to all Members.

We hope that in the interest of the United Nations, we can find some way to adopt the draft resolution during this session. It is time for Member States to demonstrate their political will. Those who continue to oppose any reform of the Security Council have the moral responsibility to explain to the larger membership the reasons behind their decisions.

The recent developments in the Middle East and the lack of action by the Security Council further emphasize and demonstrate why the Council needs to be reformed. We all recognize the competence of the Security Council as envisaged in Article 24 of the Charter, whereby Member States have conferred on the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. But to date there has been a lack of real effort on the part of the Council to address this deteriorating situation.

On the question of expansion of the Security Council, Malaysia fully supports the expansion of both categories of membership on the basis of geographical distribution, to make it more representative, reflecting the geopolitics of today. As we have said in the past, if there is no agreement on expansion of the permanent membership, we should proceed with expansion of the non-permanent membership while keeping the issue of expansion of the permanent membership on the active agenda of the United Nations.

In conclusion, Ambassador Diarra, my delegation once again expresses its support for you. We are confident that you will lead us to a fruitful discussion and a fruitful outcome.

Mr. Kariyawasam (Sri Lanka): First of all, permit me to congratulate you, Ambassador Diarra, on your chairing of this very important debate.

My delegation is pleased that the General Assembly is meeting in plenary to discuss the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters, in the context of follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit. We recognize the importance of this debate, given the fact that the Security Council is the main organ of the United Nations vested with primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security.

Reform of the Council was also highlighted by our leaders when they met last year on the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations. The outcome document of the 2005 world summit (resolution 60/1) supports early reform of the Security Council, as an essential element of our overall effort to reform the United Nations, in order to make the Council more broadly representative, efficient and transparent, and thus to further enhance its effectiveness and legitimacy and the implementation of its decisions.

In that context, we, the States Members of the United Nations, are duty-bound to consider this issue on an ongoing basis. Therefore, it is imperative to continue to achieve progress in reform of the Security Council, in particular to make its composition much more equitably representative and its working methods much more transparent.

It is well known that the composition of the present Security Council does not reflect the current geopolitical and economic realities of the world. Therefore, for several years, at the highest level, Sri Lanka has expressed its concern about the lack of progress in addressing the question of equitable regional representation and has indicated its preferences with regard to an increase in the membership of the Security Council in both the permanent and the non-permanent categories. In that context, we once again reaffirm our support for the initiative taken by Brazil, Germany, India and Japan regarding the expansion of Council membership. We have also expressed our wish to see a consensus emerge on the representation of Africa in the Security Council. We strongly advocate the inclusion of Africa in the process of reaching a final determination on the future composition of the Council. However, it is equally important to sharpen the focus on the question of non-permanent-member representation as well, so that the interests of the majority of Member States are also taken into account.

It is the belief of my delegation that reform of the Security Council should address both expansion of the Council and improvement of its working methods. We would like to emphasize, therefore, that the ongoing initiative taken by several Member States to improve the Council's working methods should be encouraged with a view to making progress in that regard as early as possible.

We believe that, in order for any reform effort to succeed, it is essential to conduct a broader range of consultations, taking into account the legitimate concerns of all United Nations Member States with a view to building consensus. We trust that, with innovation, compromise and determination, it is not an impossible task to seek a convergence of views on this important question.

My delegation is convinced that a reformed Security Council that reflects the new political and economic realities of the world will go a long way towards enhancing the Council's legitimacy and efficacy. What is needed now is our collective political will to work towards genuine reforms.

Mr. Oh Joon (Republic of Korea): I would first like to express my delegation's appreciation to the President for convening this plenary meeting of the General Assembly on the issue of Security Council reform.

The Republic of Korea fully recognizes the importance of Security Council reform in the overall reform of the United Nations. We believe that this issue should be addressed in a way that contributes to our common efforts towards the goal of making the United Nations stronger, more efficient and better able to meet new challenges.

In that vein, the Republic of Korea remains firm in its support for a reformed Security Council that is more effective, representative, transparent, democratic and accountable. We share the position of the Uniting for Consensus group, that the best way to achieve those goals is through an increase in non-permanent, elected seats on the Council rather than through the addition of permanent members. The Uniting for Consensus

proposal for Security Council reform is fair, constructive and pragmatic. By allowing regional groups to determine their own methods of rotation, it provides more opportunities for Member States, large and small, to serve on the Council.

Turning to the issue of the working methods of the Security Council, we welcome the proposal by the five Member States of various ways to enhance the transparency, accountability and inclusiveness of the work of the Council. We hope that the efforts to improve the working methods of the Security Council can help build consensus and create a spirit of cooperation that will enable us to move forward.

The Republic of Korea believes that constructive dialogue among all Member States is necessary on the issue of Security Council reform. We are ready to engage in serious negotiations with any other Member States, in order to achieve our common goal of reforming the Security Council in the right way, which we recognize is a key aspect of the reform of the United Nations as a whole. We look forward to an open and transparent process of consultation and negotiation with a view to reaching the broadest possible agreement.

Mr. Mlynár (Slovakia): I would like to convey my delegation's appreciation to the President for convening this important meeting today. My delegation considers questions regarding the reform of the Security Council as very important: without this, comprehensive reform of the United Nations cannot be complete. Also, reform is our common obligation as provided in paragraphs 153 and 154 of the outcome document of the 2005 world summit (resolution 60/1), where we committed ourselves to continuing efforts to reform the United Nations in order to make the Council more broadly representative, efficient and transparent and thus to further enhance its effectiveness and legitimacy.

We have an obligation to the issue of the increasing the membership of the Security Council, as well as to the question of improving its working methods. As we have repeatedly stated on previous occasions, Slovakia is firmly committed to a reform of the Security Council. First of all, it needs to be made more representative, more effective and more transparent. In that context, we believe that the Security Council needs to be enlarged in both categories of its membership: permanent and non-permanent. The present membership structure is clearly imbalanced and, in a number of aspects, does not truly reflect the current situation in the world.

It seems only appropriate that enlargement in the permanent category should also include countries of the global South. Only such expansion could rectify the existing imbalance in the composition of the Council. We duly note that several developing and industrialized countries with political and economic potential have staked a claim for permanent membership. We wish to reiterate our explicit position that an enlarged Security Council should include Germany and Japan as new permanent members.

The working methods of the Security Council need to be enhanced. Some progress has already been made towards making the work of the Security Council more transparent. In that connection, Slovakia welcomes and fully supports the outcome of the intensive work of the Security Council's Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions as already presented in the debate by its Chair, the Permanent Representative of Japan, Ambassador Oshima. Slovakia, as a current non-permanent member of the Security Council, will continue to take an active part in the work of the working group.

Mandate review is an essential element of the summit reform agenda, one that will help make the whole Organization, including the Security Council, more relevant, more efficient and more effective in its work. The Security Council's ad hoc committee on mandate review has been established. The objective is to facilitate a practical, real-world review of the Security Council's existing mandates as called for in the summit outcome document, and the work of the ad hoc committee has seen its first results.

Reform of the United Nations is a complex process. At the core of this reform undoubtedly remains the reform of its most powerful organ, which enjoys unique authority under the United Nations Charter and international law. Despite the major obstacles to be overcome, we should not relent in our efforts to achieve meaningful reform of the Security Council, so that the Council can continue to play an effective role as the principal United Nations organ responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Mrs. Gallardo Hernández (El Salvador) *(spoke in Spanish)*: Allow me, on behalf of El Salvador, to express our gratitude for the convening of this meeting to complement the informal consultations of the General Assembly and to review once again the issue of the overall reform of the Security Council, which is of great interest to us. We believe that the international community is going through a critical time in the area of peace and security in many regions of the world, which makes clear the urgent need for progress in Security Council reform.

El Salvador has firmly and with determination supported the need to adjust the number of members and the working methods of the Security Council to the changing state of affairs in today's international relations. The modern geopolitical reality, plagued by immense challenges for international peace and security, demands a greater degree of responsibility for all States Members of the United Nations and challenges us to begin serious negotiations designed to find a solution that can win the support of all Member States.

At the 2005 world summit, our heads of State or Government agreed to explore two models for Security Council reform. We must acknowledge that to date, there has been a deadlock. We should therefore redouble our efforts towards achieving an open, democratic and transparent process of negotiation among all Member States, designed to find a way to comprehensively reform the Security Council.

El Salvador is convinced that comprehensive reform of the Security Council is a responsibility that is shared by all Member States and not the privilege of one particular group of countries. It should be added that, in an increasingly globalized and interdependent world, the consequences of a breakdown of international peace and security in any part of the world affect all countries in one way or another. For those reasons, the decisions that the Security Council may take or may fail to take will have increasingly severe repercussions in a number of areas. At this moment in particular, let us recall that the Security Council has an important unfinished task in the Middle East: contributing through its decisions and actions to the restoration of international peace and security by seeking negotiated solutions to the crisis.

From the perspective of the world economy, this kind of conflict affects, inter alia, the international prices of oil and its derivatives, causing a virtually uncontrollable rise in those prices. That forces many developing countries to allocate enormous amounts of our financial resources to pay the oil bill — resources that could have been devoted to development.

We are therefore convinced of the complexity of comprehensive reform of the Security Council. It could require the adoption of progressive measures that can be accepted and understood by the international community as a whole. Such a gradual approach could in turn help to create an atmosphere of mutual trust among all parties, making it possible to continue to intensify the negotiations on other substantive aspects involving more complex methodology in order to achieve a fully democratic, transparent and inclusive Security Council.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate that El Salvador is prepared to move forward on the path of negotiation in a spirit of openness to new possibilities in the quest for a solution to this dilemma, which undoubtedly has global repercussions.

Ms. Moses (Nauru): My delegation is grateful for the opportunity to discuss agenda item 117, "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters", and item 120, "Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit".

Nauru is most heartened at the progress achieved to date in implementing the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1). Despite that, however, we have yet to reform all the pillars that uphold the United Nations system.

Reform of the Security Council has been on the agenda of the General Assembly for more than a decade. Virtually all Member States agree that the Council should be expanded, but we have failed to reach an agreement on the details and the Council's working methods. My delegation was disappointed when this issue was put aside to make headway on other aspects of reform, as we believed that it would have been best to resolve the issue before September last year. We are of the view that taking no action to simultaneously reform all principal organs of this body not only obstructs United Nations reform in its entirety, but also creates a kink in the system that will only weaken the Organization's structure and erode its effectiveness. As the Secretary-General has stated, addressing the membership of the General Assembly,

> "in the eyes of your peoples the difficulty of reaching agreement does not excuse your failure to do so. If you want the Council and the Council's decisions to command greater respect, particularly in the developing world, you need to address the issue of its composition with greater urgency." (*A/58/PV.7, p. 4*)

Present-day global upheavals demand that we address this issue urgently and without further delay. The Security Council no longer reflects today's geopolitical realities, but rather a 1945 balance of power that no longer exists.

Nauru was a sponsor of the reform proposal submitted by the Group of Four countries (A/59/L.64). It is our view that it is still the only draft resolution that provides a proper and complete framework for change to improve the current structure of the Security Council. It is the only draft resolution that protects the interests of all States, large and small, without bias towards any particular region or group.

My delegation also welcomes and appreciates a number of other substantive draft resolutions. Some of them have already been introduced, while others have not. But all of them call for change in the Security Council's composition and working methods. In that respect, we call on all proponents of those draft resolutions who are serious about Security Council reform to come together quickly in order to bridge the gap of familiar differences through constructive dialogue, open-mindedness and flexibility, so that we can achieve real reform.

It is time to tackle this issue in a realistic and collective manner. Let us not shy away from our responsibilities. Rather, let us, in the words of the Secretary-General, be much more creative and much more daring, look at the issue in a broader context and really try to make progress.

Finally, Nauru reaffirms its support for permanent membership for Brazil, Germany, Japan and India in a reformed and expanded Security Council.

Mr. Elgannas (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like at the outset to express our sincere appreciation for the convening of this meeting on Security Council reform. This is a particularly important issue, given the challenges to international peace and security that we are facing at present in Lebanon and in Palestine.

Indeed, many innocent lives have been lost to the Israeli war machine that has been deployed against Palestinian lands and against Lebanon on the pretext of the right to legitimate self-defence. We are disappointed to see that the Security Council has been unable to adopt robust measures to put an end to the killing in the region.

The responsibility of the United Nations for the maintenance of international peace and security cannot be carried out without democratic reform of the Organization, and particularly of the Security Council, which remains an undemocratic body in terms of representation and performance. We should transfer the Council's mandate to the General Assembly, which is a more logical and objective body, particularly in the light of the constant and increasing threats to international peace and security. The Assembly, the body that is most representative of the peoples that make up the United Nations, is particularly concerned about the maintenance of international peace and security.

In the context of the lack of equitable representation in the Security Council, we must support the rightful, democratic and just demands made by the Group of African States. Africa is the only continent that does not have permanent representation in the Security Council, and its non-permanent representation is not commensurate with its size and its concerns regarding the maintenance of international peace and security. Thus, we support the demands made by the African Group at its various summits and as presented here by the representative of Algeria.

The African position, as articulated by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Group, is as follows. First, Africa must be given two permanent seats with the right of the veto; secondly, five non-permanent seats must be reserved for the continent — that is, two additional seats compared with the three seats currently occupied by Africa; thirdly, the selection criteria for candidates must be reviewed, and that is the responsibility of the African Group itself.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to reaffirm that it is willing to work closely with the Assembly to ensure the success of these consultations in order to achieve a satisfactory outcome for all.

Mr. Abdelsalam (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation would like to say how much we appreciate this meeting, which represents a good opportunity to discuss once again an important and vital issue that had almost fallen into oblivion and no longer appeared at the top of the priority list for reform of the Organization. We believe that this issue is one of the pivotal elements of the reform process, which is designed to restructure the Organization so as to enable it to respond to and tackle current challenges, shoulder its responsibilities and do its utmost to build a multilateral world governed by the principles of justice and equality.

My delegation too endorses the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Algeria on behalf of the African Group.

We wish to see comprehensive system-wide reform taking into account the accelerated changes in the modern world, making it possible for us to tackle current challenges and respecting the legitimate aspirations of the developing world and in particular Africa.

The differences of opinion and viewpoint that prevailed throughout earlier discussions on this matter and the current deadlock should not discourage us from addressing this issue, because it is vital to arrive at consensus on the question of Security Council reform by overcoming all obstacles. In order to do so, we need to look dispassionately at the benefits of such reform and display a sense of responsibility and flexibility in order to achieve our goals.

My delegation deeply regrets the delay in the reform of the Security Council and the blockage in the process, in spite of the call issued by world leaders in September 2005, which should have led to immediate action to reform the Council. This is a key aspect of reform of the United Nations as a whole. My delegation therefore believes that efforts should be stepped up to honour that commitment. Otherwise, all the efforts made so far and those to be made in future will fall far short of those commitments and will ultimately lead to the collapse of the reform process, in which we have invested sincere, arduous and persevering efforts.

My delegation is dismayed by the Security Council's encroachment on the competence of other United Nations bodies, even as it does not fulfil all its own responsibilities. Here we should underline the complex nature and tenseness of some situations — situations which in many areas represent a genuine threat to international peace and security and in the face of which the Security Council, voluntarily or otherwise, has been powerless, for reasons known to all. This means that the need for reform is even more urgent and is indeed an absolute necessity.

Reform of the United Nations is particularly urgent, because it is dictated by tragic events, such as those we have seen in the Middle East, in the face of which the Security Council remains impassive, like an external spectator awaiting intervention from some other body. The solution does in fact lie in the creation of another body in which structural defects will be corrected so as to make the Council immune from such defects — a new Council that does not submit to threats and punishment, and one with no unjust recourse to the veto, which has led to the death and maiming of old people, women and children and the squandering of their rights.

We fully endorse the African position, which appears in the document A/59/L.67, as reaffirmed by the African summits held at Sirte and Khartoum, and we are committed to engaging in a fruitful and responsible dialogue in order to tackle the challenges we face and carry out the desired reform.

Mr. Swe (Myanmar): Today's meeting on Security Council reform is most timely, and I thank the President for having convened this important meeting.

Member States have been actively engaged in the process of United Nations reform. We have also made significant achievements in that process, culminating in the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Council. As we continue with this process, we must all work for Council reform. Indeed, the Security Council must be reformed to make it more representative, efficient and transparent. It must also reflect today's global realities.

At the 2005 summit, our leaders expressed their support for the early reform of the Security Council. We all must work to achieve the goals set by our leaders. Council reform must take into consideration contemporary political and economic realities as well as the aspirations of the developing countries. To that end, we strongly believe that the Security Council should be expanded in both the permanent and the non-permanent categories. The Council must be more representative so as to enhance its effectiveness and

legitimacy. In that regard, Myanmar strongly calls for the adequate representation of developing countries in the expanded Council, in both the permanent and the non-permanent categories.

We also continue to believe strongly that any reform of the Security Council must be comprehensive. Its expansion must be accompanied by further improvements in its working methods and its decision-making process in order to make it more transparent and democratic. Member States have conferred on the Council the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, and it must be reformed to better serve the interests of the entire membership of the Organization.

My delegation appreciates the initiatives taken by the Council in recent years to promote transparency and improve its working methods, including the issuance, on 19 July, of the note by the President (S/2006/507) concerning the improvement of the working methods of the Council. We also note with interest the recent initiative by five members, which have submitted a draft resolution on the Council's working methods. We regard this initiative as a step in the right direction.

We welcome the frequent holding of open debates in the Security Council, which give non-members of the Council the opportunity to express their views on matters affecting the membership at large. We would urge the Council, in adopting resolutions or decisions with regard to such debates, to fully take into account the views raised therein by States that are not members of the Council.

We also share the view that greater transparency and increased participation apply with regard not only to Security Council decision-making but also to the work of its subsidiary organs, to promote transparency in the important work entrusted to them.

With the gradual broadening in both the volume and the scope of the work of the Council, we are now witnessing the Council's encroachment on the powers and mandates of the General Assembly. My delegation shares the concerns expressed by the Non-Aligned Movement and fully subscribes to the principled positions of the Movement pertaining to the cardinal requirement to uphold and respect the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and to maintain the relationship between the Security Council and other principal organs of the United Nations, in accordance with the Charter.

As we continue with the process of reform of the Security Council, we must ensure that members of the Council adhere to the purposes and principles of the Charter and resist any attempt to discuss issues that do not pose a threat to international or regional peace and security.

Mr. Vassilakis (Greece): At the 2005 world summit, our leaders expressed their support for an early reform and expansion of the Security Council as an essential element in the overall effort to reform the United Nations so as to reflect today's realities.

Reform has been under discussion for the past 13 years in working groups specifically created for that purpose. In recent months, an extensive debate has been under way within the United Nations, and the issue of Security Council reform has also been addressed, particularly during the April deliberations of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council.

Security Council reform also involves an improvement in the working methods of the Council. In that respect, we take note of the proposal made by the group of five small nations (S-5). Likewise, intensive efforts have been made during the past few months in the Security Council Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions, under the leadership of Japan, to enhance the efficiency and transparency of the Council's work and its interaction with non-Council members. We welcome the decision of the Security Council to endorse the recommendations of the Informal Working Group, and we strongly urge the Council to fully implement those recommendations.

With regard to Security Council enlargement, certain proposals have been submitted, and, so far, it has been impossible to achieve consensus on any of them. It is a positive sign, however, that we all share, to a large extent, the reform goals aimed at achieving a more modern and accountable Council. In that respect, we welcome the efforts made by the African Union to facilitate the relevant discussions.

We continue to believe that the comprehensive reform and expansion of the Security Council will bring it in line with contemporary realities and

reinforce the collective security system of the United Nations Charter, thus contributing to the strengthening of the United Nations as a whole.

My country continues to favour the Council's enlargement in the permanent and non-permanent categories. Such an enlargement would increase the efficiency, accountability and transparency of the Security Council, thereby enhancing its multicultural and multi-dimensional character, and rendering it more representative of the world we live in today.

In that respect, we would like to reiterate our support for the draft resolution submitted by the group of four, which Greece co-sponsored. We fully align ourselves with the principles contained therein, and we express our appreciation at the improvements that the authors have been making to the text. We encourage all members to work together constructively, and hope that they will do so, with a view to reaching an agreement that can be supported by the largest possible majority in the Organization.

In order to effectively face today's serious global threats and challenges, the United Nations, and the Security Council in particular, has to be urgently reformed. Therefore, we share the Secretary-General's view that Council reform cannot be further delayed, and, in that respect, we hope that, by the end of this year, we will all be in a position to take this much-awaited action.

Mrs. Taj (United Republic of Tanzania): The United Republic of Tanzania associates itself with the statement made by Ambassador Youcef Yousfi of Algeria on behalf of the African Group.

The General Assembly, and the Organization as a whole, have recorded important achievements since the adoption of the World Summit Outcome document last September. They include the establishment of the Human Rights Council, the Central Emergency Response Fund and the Peacebuilding Commission.

However, the failure to reform and expand the Security Council remains a glaring shortcoming. All our assumptions about good governance and legitimacy will ring hollow as long as the appeals — indeed, demands — of a majority of Member States for reform of the Security Council remain unfulfilled.

The United Republic of Tanzania notes the initial steps undertaken within both the Security Council and the General Assembly with a view to reforming the working methods of the Council. We therefore welcome the efforts exercised by the Council's Informal Working Group Concerning the Council's Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. We recognize that the Working Group has been working hard under the chairmanship of Ambassador Kenzo Oshima of Japan. We commend that effort, meant to enhance the Council's efficiency. We hope that this exercise will be a continuous process.

We also wish to commend the initiative undertaken by the group of five small nations (S-5) — Singapore, Liechtenstein, Switzerland, Costa Rica and Jordan — urging the reform of the working methods of the Council. We have every reason to believe that their initiatives enjoy significant support within the larger membership of the United Nations.

On the question of equitable representation and increase in the membership of the Security Council, we would like to thank President Eliasson and his two co-Chairpersons, Ambassador Majoor of the Netherlands and Ambassador Bethel of the Bahamas. The co-Chairpersons have done well in the consultations they had undertaken and the strenuous efforts they made. However, we regret that their diligent labour and the intensive bilateral and group consultations have not paved the way for a solution to this pressing question.

Nothing could illustrate better than the Security Council the imbalance of power structures in the Organization. Its expansion is not only a question of governance but of inclusion in the decision-making process and of greater legitimacy. Maintaining the status quo is not in the interest of our collective membership. The developing countries are the principal victims of this imbalance. It is this lack of equality and representation that Africa seeks to redress.

The challenge is still one that can be overcome. It is also for all of us to determine how we can better reform the Council, one of the important organs of the United Nations.

Mr. Kebret (Ethiopia): I would first of all like to associate myself with the statement made by the Chair of the African Group regarding the issue under discussion. Let me also express my appreciation to the President of the General Assembly for arranging this formal meeting on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council.

My delegation regards Security Council reform as an initiative to bring the Council into line with the realities of international politics at the beginning of the twenty-first century. We all agree that the Security Council must improve its representativeness to better reflect today's world. Furthermore, Security Council reform should enhance the Council's democratization, accountability, credibility and efficiency.

We have conducted discussions in this forum on Security Council reform for more than a decade, only to achieve no consensus among Member States on how to expand the Council, although some progress has been made on the issues of procedures and working methods.

My delegation is of the view that Security Council reform should unite, not divide, Member States. We need to work hard to create consensus on this very important agenda item and the ongoing United Nations reform process as a whole. The political determination of States to achieve comprehensive Security Council reform, as reflected in the speeches made by our leaders during the summit last September, must be maintained and strengthened.

My delegation believes that Council enlargement must be consistent with the sovereignty of States and equitable regional representation. Ethiopia firmly believes that any expansion in the membership of the Security Council should ensure enhanced representation of the African continent, as has been stated time and again by States and Governments. We believe that the Security Council needs to reflect present world realities and become more responsive to the aspirations of Member States, including the African States.

In view of this, my delegation believes that it is high time for United Nations Member States to re-engage themselves with more determination, to address the issue of Council reform. The strong momentum created in the previous deliberations on the issue should not be reduced by other United Nations reforms, although those are equally important.

Mr. Khaleel (Maldives): The resolve of the international community to reform and revitalize the United Nations has never been stronger. The momentum generated by the reforms process over the past year has been remarkable, and we should not let the goodwill and understanding that we have witnessed recently diminish before real and meaningful reforms can be implemented.

Since the world summit last September, much indeed has been achieved. The establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission, the creation of the Human Rights Council and the various reforms that have already been agreed, on the administration and management of the Organization, are major achievements that we all can be proud of in that regard. However, it is equally important that we make advances in our deliberations to reform the Security Council.

For more than a decade, we have discussed the need to reform the Security Council to enable it to better reflect present-day realities, without much success. The Maldives believes that the time has come to break the impasse and take bold and concrete decisions. The Maldives has always supported the enlargement of the Security Council. We believe that reform of the Council should include the enlargement of its membership — both in the permanent and the non-permanent member categories — as well as a thorough examination of its working methods and decision-making process.

At this juncture allow me to acknowledge with appreciation the work being done by the Security Council's Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, aimed at enhancing the transparency and efficiency of the Council. We are fully convinced that a more transparent and more representative Council would enjoy increased and strengthened authority and effectiveness.

While we welcome and remain open to the various proposals that are before the Assembly, in our view, the proposals of the group of four nations on the reform of the Council would form a good basis for a resolution on that important issue.

Sound multilateralism is crucial to our quest for a better world in an age of globalization. Strengthening the role of the United Nations in maintaining international peace and security, fostering economic cooperation and harmonizing international reforms towards a better future are not impossible tasks.

Mr. Thapa (Nepal): I thank the President for convening this plenary meeting of the General Assembly. The fact that the issue of Security Council reform has generated so much interest both in the

corridors of the United Nations and outside for so many years points to the fact that the world is striving for a restructured and rejuvenated Security Council — in terms of both its size and its working methods — to address present-day geopolitical realities.

The various proposals that are on the table in the United Nations concerning reform of the Council, while at times mutually exclusive, are guided by the aim of making the Security Council more effective, efficient and democratic. However, the differing perceptions on how to reach the goal of Security Council reform have made our task difficult, if not impossible. We believe that if we continue to work in a spirit of cooperation, the fruits of Security Council reform will be within our reach.

The delegation of Nepal, like many other delegations, holds the view that the membership of the Security Council should be expanded in both categories to reflect the reality of the contemporary world. In that context, the aspirations of Brazil, Germany, India and Japan to serve on an expanded Security Council as permanent members merit serious consideration. We also believe that the bid of the African countries to be represented on the Council as permanent members should receive serious consideration.

It is the belief of my delegation that there is a need to make separate arrangements for the enlargement of the Security Council in order to ensure the greater participation of small Member States on the basis of the role they have played, or the potential role they might play, in the maintenance of international peace and security. In the interest of moving forward, there should be expansion in the non-permanent category of membership, even if it takes time to take decisions on the permanent category. There is no doubt that it is easier to address less complicated issues first.

The second issue related to the reform of the Security Council — the issue of improving the working methods of the Council — is an issue that is no less important than that of enlargement. The proposals of the group of five small countries on the improvement of the working methods of the Security Council, as contained in draft resolution A/60/L.49, contain many useful ideas. We also appreciate the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2006/507) on efforts to enhance the efficiency and transparency of the Council's work.

My delegation takes this opportunity to congratulate the Chairman of the Security Council's Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, His Excellency Ambassador Kenzo Oshima of Japan, and his able team for the hard work they have done.

The delegation of Nepal is firm in its belief that the working methods of the Security Council should be transparent, inclusive, effective and efficient. We should ensure that no organ of the United Nations exceeds the limits of its powers and functions as accorded by the Charter.

Mr. Le Luong Minh (Viet Nam): I join others in expressing gratitude for the convening of this meeting to enable delegations to express their views on the question of reform of the Security Council. My delegation hopes that with the new vigour created by the recent achievements of Member States — the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Council — and by the progress, albeit modest, in the implementation of other commitments contained in the outcome document (resolution 60/1) of last year's world summit, we will soon arrive at a solution that enjoys broad support.

My delegation has always maintained that reform of the Security Council is one of the most important issues in the process of United Nations reform. What we all have been calling for and striving for is comprehensive reform of the Organization. Without reform of the Security Council, the main United Nations body, charged with the task of maintaining international peace and security, no reform of the Organization can be comprehensive.

That having been said, we believe that no reform of the Security Council can be comprehensive in the absence of either its two equally important elements, namely, reform of its composition and reform of its working methods. My delegation may be flexible with regard to the sequence of the steps to be taken, but let me reaffirm our fundamental position that in the end, both elements must be achieved. After all, everyone is aware of their complementarities.

The shortcomings existing in the Security Council's working methods result from the Council's composition, which does not reflect the changes in the composition of the Organization itself, of which the Council is a principal organ. Since the Council's membership was increased to 15 in 1963, the

membership of the Organization has increased by 79. That change is so substantial that it cannot be ignored.

It is with that understanding that, since the early stage of the ongoing debate on Security Council reform, my delegation has joined the majority of Member States in proposing that Council membership be increased in both categories — permanent and non-permanent — and that developing countries, which constitute two thirds of the United Nations membership, be more adequately represented on the Council. Our understanding, and thus our position, remain the same.

It should be pointed out, however, that increasing or not increasing the membership of the Security Council is not a matter of sharing a cake or a piece of cake. The change in Council membership that we support thus cannot, and must not, be an end in itself. This membership change must help achieve our final objective of ensuring the legitimacy of all of the Council's actions. That legitimacy can be enhanced only through improvements in the Council's working methods.

The Non-Aligned Movement has, on more than one occasion, made clear its position that reform of the Security Council should not be confined to the question of membership. The adoption of measures to ensure that the Council is genuinely democratic, transparent and accountable in its work is crucial and constitutes an indispensable element of comprehensive reform.

In that connection, and with regard to the practice of the veto, I wish to reaffirm Viet Nam's position that, pending its eventual elimination, the exercise of the veto should be limited to actions taken by the Security Council under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. In addition, draft resolution A/60/L.49, submitted by the delegations of Costa Rica, Liechtenstein, Jordan, Singapore and Switzerland — the group of five small nations, or "Small Five" (S-5), contains many specific proposals in other areas that constitute an excellent basis for continued work aimed at improving the Council's working methods. We highly appreciate the contribution of the S-5 and stand ready to continue our consultations with them and with other Member States on this matter.

The members of the Security Council, in their efforts to enhance the efficiency and transparency of their work as well as their interaction with non-members — as reflected in the note issued on 19 July 2006 by the President of the Council (S/2006/507) — are committed to implementing the measures contained in the annex to that note, which are related to many aspects of the Council's work. We welcome these efforts by Council members, especially the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, and we sincerely thank the Chair of the Working Group and the President of the Security Council for their contributions. As a first-time candidate for a non-permanent seat on the Council, we particularly value the measures to assist newly elected members as detailed in part XII of the annex.

In conclusion, permit me, on behalf of the Vietnamese delegation, to assure the Assembly of our continued commitment to working with the President and with all other Member States in striving to accomplish one of the most important tasks aimed at making our Organization stronger and more responsive to today's realities.

Mr. Penjo (Bhutan): My delegation would like to express its appreciation for the convening of this plenary meeting to continue with our efforts to reform the Security Council — an issue that has been before us for a very long time. It is obvious that no reform of the United Nations would be complete without reform of the Security Council. Like many others, my delegation supports comprehensive Council reform. Only through a comprehensive approach can we transform the Security Council into a more representative, democratic and legitimate body.

My delegation believes that the proposal (A/59/L.64) of the Group of Four (G-4), which we fully support, meets the expectations of the wider membership because it would make the Security Council more effective and reflective of the current world situation. It also contains proposals to change the Council's working methods in order to make that body more transparent and inclusive. That is of particular interest to small countries like mine, as it would allow us to be more closely involved in the Council's work. My delegation therefore believes that the G-4 proposal provides a good basis for the General Assembly to proceed with the all-important task of bringing the Security Council into line with contemporary realities and challenges.

My delegation believes that reform of the Security Council is long overdue and that the General

Assembly must seize the opportunity provided by the G-4 proposal. We hope that, through this process, the General Assembly will be able to arrive at a formula that will command the widest possible support of the membership.

Mr. Arias Cárdenas (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela attaches particular importance to the reform of the United Nations in general, which is an essential process we firmly support due to the current need to democratize the Organization and to strengthen the General Assembly as the key deliberative, and most representative, body of the United Nations. In that regard, we support the speedy reform of the Security Council as a key component of the United Nations reform process, so as to make it more representative of the international community and reflective of modern geopolitical realities while giving it greater legitimacy and democratic spirit, in keeping with what was set out in the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2).

Venezuela reaffirms that the membership of the Security Council must be expanded in both the permanent and non-permanent categories of membership, with the inclusion of developing countries among the new permanent members. Expansion should aim at achieving better and greater representation of developing countries. Likewise, as regards the democratization of the United Nations, Venezuela believes that it is essential to eliminate the power of the veto. In that regard, we very much look forward to the outcome of the consultations being held among the Group of Four, brotherly African countries and other interested States to reach a common position that will make it possible to put together a joint draft resolution on Security Council enlargement.

But reform of the Security Council should not be limited solely to expansion of its membership. It should also address other aspects, such as the agenda, working methods and decision-making processes of the Council.

With regard to improving working methods, we view with interest draft resolution A/60/L.49, which was put forward by Costa Rica and other States. Our delegation has transmitted its observations regarding the text. We hope that our contributions will be taken into consideration.

The Council should improve its working methods to enhance the participation of non-member States in its work, improve accountability and increase transparency. The number of private meetings should be kept to a minimum, and there should be more public meetings and open debates to hear the views of non-member States and to make it possible for those States to have a greater part in the discussions. It is important for the Council to take into account the opinions of non-member States. We have noted that the Council has the habit of taking decisions immediately after the statements of non-member States. They should listen to the opinions of those States first, then consult among themselves, while taking those opinions into account, and finally take a decision. Open debates should be real opportunities to take into account the opinions and contributions of non-member States.

With regard to the agenda, the Council should focus on problems relating to threats to international peace and security and avoid encroaching on issues that may fall within the purview of the General Assembly or other organs of the United Nations. We have also noted that the Council has increasingly had recourse to Chapter VII of the Charter, using it as an umbrella to take up issues that do not necessarily constitute immediate threats to international peace and security. Chapter VII should only be relied upon as a last recourse.

In recent years, the Council has been quick to threaten or authorize coercive action in certain situations, while remaining silent and impassive in other cases. In particular, Venezuela believes that, pending the achievement of the ultimate goal of eliminating the power of the veto, we must find ways to limit and reduce its use, including mechanisms whereby the veto could be overridden. It is inconceivable that opposition from one country out of the 192 that currently make up the Organization can prevent the United Nations from taking action on issues having to do with international peace and security, as has occurred with regard to the situation in the Middle East, especially as regards the recent attacks against Palestine and Lebanon. That indiscriminate use of force — which has caused, and continues to cause, hundreds of dead or wounded civilians, including innocent women and children — and included the destruction of much civilian infrastructure, has also created a serious humanitarian crisis.

Venezuela would like the Council to exercise its responsibility to find effective solutions to international conflicts, while at the same time enforcing international law and the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, so as to promote peace, which is the basic goal of the Organization and of the international community.

Mr. Savua (Fiji): We thank the President for convening this meeting to discuss agenda item 117, entitled "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters", and agenda item 120, entitled "Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit".

The widespread support for continued deliberation on those subjects is indicative of the importance the items represent to the majority of the membership of the United Nations. Fiji has been a consistent supporter of the calls to reform the Security Council, in particular as regards the expansion of its membership. We also continue to support calls for the taking of concrete measures in follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit.

The Secretary-General's words on the reform of the Security Council continue to resonate in this Hall as we again discuss the issue. He said, and we agree, that no reform of the United Nations would be complete without the reform of the Security Council. Until we heed those words and take positive action, the public perception that there is no real reform will continue to afflict this institution as it attempts to bring about substantive and meaningful reform.

The current scenario of a world torn by war and strife demands a stronger and effective Security Council, one which is also representative of the current geopolitical realities and has every Member's interest at heart. To lend the Council the credibility and legitimacy it deserves, its membership must reflect the broader membership of the Organization, including by granting permanent representation to members from both the developed and developing worlds. To retain the status quo is to hang on to an old structure that was shaped by the world of 1945, does not heed the changing times and is oblivious to calls for reform and change. Many already categorize the Council as the exclusive domain of the privileged few.

While we want to remain optimistic, we are worried that the energy and momentum to keep the reform initiative moving forward is quickly waning. Frustration is slowly creeping in. Until something constructive is achieved from the exchanges that have taken place, the outlook for real reform will, unfortunately, remain dim in the eyes of many. A few countries, seeking to avoid any decision on this matter, take refuge in claims for consensus and in allegations regarding the disruptive nature of the issue. Their actions will only contribute to the perpetuation of current inequities in the structure of the Organization and dampen the aspirations of Members eager to bring about a more balanced distribution of power in the work of the Security Council.

Fiji reiterates its support for draft resolution A/60/L.46, which has been proposed for discussion. We believe that the draft resolution encompasses the interests of the majority and can be the basis of any change or review. It is indeed a step, albeit small, in the right direction, and we urge members favourably to consider the draft resolution in the spirit in which it is being proposed.

We are once again indulging in an exercise that has been ongoing for well over a decade — discussing the issue of reform of the Security Council. As mentioned, the energy and the mood are there for some real action to take place. To further delay would only bring frustration and fatigue and send the wrong message to those we serve that we did not seize the opportunity but preferred to wait. We hope that the cost of delays and procrastination will not be too high.

Mr. Romero Martínez (Honduras) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to say how gratified we are to be able once again to resume our discussion of the important items entitled "The question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters" and "Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit".

As a founding Member of the United Nations, Honduras firmly supports all endeavours that seek to render our organs more efficient, more up-to-date and more responsive in the historic undertaking to which we are committed.

The creation of a more peaceful, prosperous and democratic world remains a legitimate aspiration on the part of our peoples. For that reason, we remain committed to what we have already defined here as important areas in which we need to take action: development, peace and collective security, human

rights and the rule of law, and a clear and tangible strengthening of the United Nations system as a whole.

For some time, in these corridors, from this rostrum or, perhaps, working in a spirit of hope in our impersonal offices, we have been engaged in the process of elaborating significant positions and outlining the carefully crafted solutions with which we must provide today's complex and difficult world, in a spirit of justice and legality.

Certain goals have been met. The establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission and of the new Human Rights Council represent a promising step forward in strengthening and improving our institutions. The commitment to, and the challenge of, strengthening the United Nations remain, with a view to increasing its authority and promoting its efficiency. We must also give fresh impetus to the United Nations intergovernmental organs so as to adapt them to the vital needs of the twenty-first century, which calls for an appropriate level of cooperation and coordination.

We continue to support the speedy reform of the Security Council, and we reaffirm the responsibility entrusted to it by Member States in the area of the maintenance of international peace and security, pursuant to the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations.

Our country, Honduras, and our delegation are eager to cooperate actively in every effort aimed at strengthening our Organization, making it more broad-based, transparent and efficient. Above all, we seek to foster greater participation, on an equal footing, of all States on the basis of the peaceful settlement of disputes, and especially respect for human dignity, which is sacrosanct.

Mr. Landemoen (Norway): Norway's position on Security Council reform is well known. As we stated in our plenary meeting a year ago, on 12 July 2005, our main priorities have been to ensure that the Council operates coherently and efficiently and that the composition of the Council reflects the current configuration of the United Nations membership. Consequently, we support an expansion.

There are several reasons why Norway believes that expansion of the membership of the Council is necessary. Over the last 60 years, the overall membership of the United Nations has almost quadrupled. The Security Council should reflect that growth in order to ensure the Council's legitimacy and efficiency. Norway is also an advocate for the interests of small countries in the rotation for non-permanent seats, as well as for the representation of African as well as Latin-American and Caribbean countries, which, in our view, have been underrepresented in the Council.

That means that Norway supports a balanced enlargement of the Security Council: an increase in the number of both permanent and non-permanent members, with small countries and developing countries duly represented.

We cannot discuss Security Council expansion without addressing the question of veto rights. We have consistently encouraged permanent members to refrain from exercising their veto power. The Norwegian view has been that, in order to ensure an efficient Council, veto power should not be extended to the new permanent members of an enlarged Council. We thus welcome earlier statements made by the Group of Four (G-4) that it is their intention not to exercise the right to veto.

Reform of the Security Council is more than a question of expansion. Equally important is the improvement of the Council's working methods. The draft resolution proposed by Costa Rica, Jordan, Liechtenstein, Singapore and Switzerland aims at improving the dialogue between the General Assembly and the Security Council. While the draft resolution fully respects the Security Council's competencies, it points, in a positive manner, to areas where cooperation should be deepened. It is Norway's view that an enhanced and structured dialogue between the General Assembly and the Council would lead to a strengthening of both.

Mr. Beck (Solomon Islands): I wish to thank President Eliasson for having convened this meeting on reform of the Security Council.

The timing for this debate is right. Ten months ago, 170 of our Heads of State and Government met and called for reform of the Security Council.

Since the summit, we have adopted a number of important reforms, including, among others, the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Council. The time is now ripe to balance those reforms with reform of the Security

Council. After all, the Security Council plays an important role in all reform processes.

The world continues to look to the United Nations for solutions. Over the years, the Security Council, a principal organ of the United Nations, has lived up to its calling. But with more reform, the Council could do more in preserving international peace and security. Inaction by the Council in containing certain conflicts, for political reasons, has been at great expense to the membership of this institution. The sad experience of my country is a case in point: lives lost in an ethnic conflict could have been saved if enough attention had been given during our hour of need. My delegation values the concept of the responsibility to act, which is an element within the summit outcome document (resolution 60/1) that should be one of the principles that guides the reform process in addressing current and future conflicts. In particular, we would like to see a strengthened relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly and between the Council and regional organizations.

In trying to reform the Council, we must look at its enlargement through the addition of both permanent and non-permanent seats as well as its working methods. For the last 13 years, since the establishment of the Assembly's Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform, a number of proposals for reform have been put on the table for discussion. We must now look at what can be done. In doing so, we would do justice for our people, enabling the Security Council to increase its legitimacy and making the Council more responsive to meeting today's security threats. After all, there are countries that can afford to wait, while there are those in vulnerable situations that would like to see reform happen sooner rather than later.

Solomon Islands sees the world from a simple perspective. Nothing happens in this world without cost. Hence, we believe that those who have the capability and ability to do more should step up to the challenge and play a more prominent role in preserving peace.

As far as process is concerned, my delegation would like to see both the enlargement issue and the working methods issue be given equal attention. In our view, the Group of Four (G-4) draft resolution (A/59/L.64) is comprehensive enough to be a starting point for negotiations. My delegation identifies with the G-4 proposal and also remains supportive of elements of the draft resolution (A/60/L.49) of the group of five small nations and looks forward to having more discussion on a transparent, inclusive and accountable Council.

In closing, Solomon Islands, as a least developed small island State, cannot afford to have this issue drag on for so long. We must collectively concentrate on finding common ground and move on to address other issues of reform in making our multilateral system more effective and more efficient.

Mr. Kittikhoun (Lao People's Democratic Republic) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank the President for having convened this meeting to debate an issue whose importance is known to us all: reform of the Security Council. As we all are aware, the 2005 world summit added its support to the reform of the Security Council, in order to make that body more representative, effective and transparent, with a view to strengthening the effectiveness, legitimacy and implementation of its decisions. Our heads of State or Government also recommended that the Security Council should continue to adapt its working methods, enhance its accountability to Member States and promote transparency in its work.

This debate provides us with an opportunity to assess the progress that has been made so far and, on the basis of that, to set out the way forward. The position of my country, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, on Security Council reform is well known and has always been clear. On many occasions, our position has been stated before the General Assembly by our Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs.

We favour an expansion in the membership, both of permanent and non-permanent members — I stress, both permanent and non-permanent — representing developed and developing countries, on the basis of equitable geographical representation and taking account of the relative weight of different countries. Furthermore, we would like to emphasize that reform of the Security Council must also include measures which would make the Council's decision-making process more transparent.

At the moment, Africa, which is a large continent, is not represented among the permanent members. In our view, that is a major injustice. As with all other

peoples throughout the world, the people of Africa deserve greater respect. Within this process of Security Council reform, everything should therefore be done to ensure that a new enlarged Security Council is a body which includes permanent members and non-permanent members from all regions, including Africa.

Today's world is going through rapid and complex changes. Since 1945, major changes have taken place. In our view, the Security Council should adapt itself to the new global realities. On that note, we must all work together to reform the Security Council, the organ responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, in order to make it more legitimate, transparent and effective.

Mr. Arifi (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): I would like first of all to thank the President of the General Assembly for having convened these meetings, which will allow us to exchange views on an important question which was on our agenda in 2005 during the preparation of the outcome document (resolution 60/1) that was adopted by our heads of State or Government at the 2005 world summit.

Indeed, we all recall the efforts made and the energies expended during the first part of 2005, following in particular our consideration of the report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change (A/59/565) and that of the Secretary-General entitled "In larger freedom: towards security, development and human rights for all" (A/59/2005). The reform of the United Nations saw particular divisions on the question of the enlargement of the Security Council.

More than ever, it is necessary that we follow up in a determined way to the decisions taken by our heads of State or Government. Significant progress has been made, in particular through the creation of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Council. These are extremely significant examples which should prompt us all to maintain that momentum as we address the issue of reform of the Security Council, which we deem a key component of the reform of the United Nations system.

All the results achieved since last December have been reached in the context of a consensus, which indicates the desire of us all to ensure that there is a solid basis for progress towards strengthening this body, which must be adapted to the current state of international relations in the wake of 60 years of change.

As in the past, my delegation continues to believe that we will all gain from having a Security Council that is more balanced and more representative, with improved working methods and greater transparency in its decision-making. That will allow it to enhance its authority and to increase its legitimacy so that it can better fulfil its mandate as the principal organ responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security.

In order to implement the decisions taken by our leaders at the September summit, we must give high priority to the question of reform of the Security Council, as an important element of overall reform of the United Nations. The Council's expansion must be considered in parallel with reform of its working methods.

The working methods of the Security Council have been the subject of a number of specific proposals, in particular the recommendations made by the Informal Working Group of the Security Council on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, headed by Japan, whose work we commend. We also commend the text produced by the group of five small nations (S-5), which, we believe, deserves careful study, because it addresses important elements related to this reform and offers some specific responses to the concerns and expectations of Member States.

Morocco believes that, while seeking to increase the membership of the Security Council, we should also ensure that this body remains fully effective, so that it can fully meet its responsibilities in the area of the maintenance of international peace and security.

While recognizing the importance of Security Council reform, the Kingdom of Morocco hopes that such reform will not lead to any division between its members or create splits that could prejudice the objective of strengthening that body — an objective to which we all are committed.

We fully understand the legitimate aspirations of some countries to take part, on a permanent basis, in the work of maintaining peace, but we believe also that the Council should extend its consultations beyond its members to all those countries that are concerned and to troop-contributing countries whenever it is fulfilling its responsibilities in the context of a crisis or in a

given situation. The legitimacy of the Council's action is at stake.

Given the importance of cultural or religious differences as factors in the emergence of current crises, it is important to take this aspect into account in our discussions on Council expansion, and to address not only the question of geographical representation but also the issue of States' belonging to certain groups having similar cultural and belief systems.

In that respect, Morocco remains true to its cultural heritage and to its African and Arab Muslim sense of solidarity, and it will spare no effort in working towards expansion of the membership of the Council on a democratic, equitable and responsible basis.

Mr. Motoc (Romania): I wish to express my deep appreciation to President Eliasson for his inspired and persistent efforts to schedule this plenary debate before the summer break. He was right to do so, as Security Council reform is part and parcel of the comprehensive vision for change set out by our leaders at the United Nations summit in September 2005.

Half of the United Nations membership and representatives of political and regional groups in New York will have given their views on Security Council reform by the end of the day. It is, we have to admit, a rather unusual level of participation for the end of July.

Reforming the main world body entrusted with the maintenance of peace and security clearly remains a top priority on the agenda of many States Members of the United Nations, as is, implicitly, the broader political or institutional reform of our venerable Organization, which should accordingly be given adequate priority in the context of the overall process of the pursuit of change in the United Nations.

Mere functional adjustment seldom can promote the achievement of genuine and effective reform. That is one of the important reasons underpinning Romania's longstanding position in favour of meaningful reform of the Security Council. Our views have been expressed extensively on a number of occasions, both here in New York and bilaterally in the capitals.

Our assessment of the current state of affairs is that, on the one hand, the Security Council is effectively discharging its duties under the United Nations Charter, while, on the other hand, changing its composition to better reflect today's geopolitical realities is a much-needed step. The former conclusion does not mean that there is no room for improvement in the Council's working methods, and I take this opportunity to commend Japan's dedicated endeavours to that end from within the Council.

Along those lines, it is timely also that we have the opportunity to dwell, on this same occasion, on the draft proposed by the group of five small nations (S-5), which contains many valuable ideas.

I would like to make two more brief points at this late hour on a Friday afternoon. The first is that Romania is ready to embark on a meaningful consideration of the possibility of enlarging the composition of the Security Council, with the preservation of the features that make it an effective and credible main body of the Organization.

Judging from the latest debates on the matter, favourable political winds seem to be blowing in the direction of pursuing an enlargement of the Council, to which all Member States — potential beneficiaries, to a greater or lesser extent, of reform — should contribute and thus find their aspirations duly reflected. Indeed, such enlargement is a process that cannot succeed unless it is broadly owned.

The second point is one that has been touched upon in the earlier intervention of our Armenian colleague, who spoke on behalf of the Eastern European Group as Chairman for the month. Echoing the position of principle he voiced at the time, my delegation would like to put on record the fact that it considers that the share allotted to our region in the various enlargement proposals discussed so far is minimal.

The realistic view that Eastern European countries have taken with regard to reform of the Security Council should not, however, be misinterpreted. Without the possibility of a fair share in the eventual outcome, no representative of those countries would be in a position to persuade political and popular constituencies to endorse the proposed enlargement. Many seem to forget at times that the Eastern European Group is one of the five regional pillars upon which the United Nations currently rests. Even if the Group itself did not exist, 23 countries from that region are Members of the United Nations, and they will no longer accept consignment to oblivion of that for which they stand.

Romania believes in reform of the Security Council and, more broadly, of the world Organization, in which all of us — large, medium, or small nations, whether more to the North or more to the South, whether first to see the sun rising or first to see it setting — are taking this journey together.

Mr. Vila Coma (Andorra) (*spoke in French*): At the September 2005 world summit, our heads of State approved reform of the United Nations. In that process, Security Council reform was recognized as an important element because of the Council's links with the other organs of the United Nations system. Today — and we can welcome this fact — most of the objectives set for reform have been attained, including the creation of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Council and the commencement of the activities of the Ethics Office.

However, reform remains incomplete, despite the discussions on Security Council reform that have taken place over the past year. Compounding that situation is a whole decade of work in which the project of Council reform has often been the subject of attempted negotiations to adapt the Council to the new requirements of the Organization.

A response to that situation can be put off no longer. Reform of the United Nations without reform of the Security Council would be incomplete. It would further aggravate certain imbalances and dysfunctional elements already existing within our Organization.

True reform of the Security Council must be based on a broad consensus regarding greater representativity in keeping with today's geopolitical realities — an essential element if the Council is to be provided with greater legitimacy, authority and effectiveness. Likewise, a framework of partnership based on genuine representativity for all countries, from the largest to the smallest, must be respected.

The Principality of Andorra supports reform based on principles that will ensure a more accurate reflection of global realities. Indeed, expansion of the Security Council has been supported by our Government through statements made in various general debates of the General Assembly.

With regard to reform of the Security Council's working methods, we welcome the progress made recently through the Council's adoption of the note of its President of 19 July 2006 (S/2006/507). The note reflects unanimity concerning the urgent need to improve the working methods.

While Andorra welcomes that approach, we continue to fully support the draft resolution entitled "Improving the working methods of the Security Council" (A/60/L.49), submitted by Costa Rica, Jordan, Liechtenstein, Singapore and Switzerland. We believe that the draft resolution contains all the essential elements to make it an excellent working tool to ensure that the Council's various activities are more dynamic and transparent and far more participatory, while safeguarding its power and its prerogatives.

Mr. Shobokshi (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I should like to express our gratitude for the convening of this important meeting to address a vital issue of great interest to the United Nations and concerning the very credibility of the Organization in the face of the many challenges it must face and the crises that the world is now experiencing. This burning issue concerns ensuring greater and more equitable representation within the Security Council and improving the Council's working methods, as agreed at the September 2005 world summit.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia supports the principle of equitable geographical representation within the Security Council in both the permanent and the non-permanent categories of membership. We must enhance and revitalize the Council so that it can fully carry out its responsibility for maintaining international peace and security in keeping with the mandate of the international community. In that way, the Security Council can prevent conflicts before they arise and settle crises before they worsen and cause civilian deaths and great material damage.

For the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, it is extremely important that States — however big and powerful they be — avoid taking unilateral decisions. We must work together in the Security Council, because it is responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security. We must respect the Council's resolutions and ensure that they are implemented. All States must be treated equally, and without selectivity or double standards, and we must maintain the Organization's prestige and credibility, which have suffered so much damage in recent times.

My delegation has participated in all the consultations on this issue at all levels, both within and outside the Organization. We have listened to the views

and statements of Member States, which were serious and constructive contributions. However, if those ideas are not implemented, they will remain mere ideas. It is important that all members of the Security Council, especially those with permanent seats, shoulder their responsibilities and play their full roles in a logical and rational manner so that the Council can cope with current changes and developments and, in both qualitative and quantitative terms, meet the aspirations that led to the creation of the United Nations.

Ms. Rivero (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I wish to thank the presidency for the convening of this debate, which has given the General Assembly an opportunity to deliberate once again on an issue of such importance for the entire United Nations membership, thus helping us to take a concrete step forward towards what Uruguay regards as one of the most substantial of achievements: revitalization of the General Assembly.

It is very gratifying to meet here together to discuss how to continue making progress in the arduous task of United Nations reform, which we have been striving to achieve for some time now. Although we are very optimistic, we believe that it will still require a significant effort on our part.

Uruguay, as we have previously stated, agrees that there is a need to reform the Security Council, both to adapt it to current circumstances and new challenges and because any human creation can and must evolve if it is to continue to be effective. My country believes that it is therefore necessary that the Security Council expand the number of its members. But we also wish it to be a more efficient, representative, democratic and transparent organ.

That is why we attach key importance to improving the working methods of the Council. We have noted the unanimous call of previous speakers in that regard, and we are sure that, on the basis of this same analysis, we shall be able to achieve tangible results much more quickly.

In this regard, we are particularly grateful for the proposal that was made by the group of five small nations — the "Small Five" (S-5), consisting of Costa Rica, Jordan, Liechtenstein, Singapore and Switzerland — in draft resolution A/60/L.49, which we believe will be an excellent basis for our future work.

We welcome the fact that members of the Security Council are also working in the same direction. We look forward to the speedy implementation of the recommendations made by the Council's Informal Working Group chaired by the Permanent Representative of Japan.

We reaffirm that Uruguay, as a country which since the creation of the United Nations has spoken out against the use of the veto, cannot support any solution which would envisage an increase in the members of the Security Council that would be granted that power.

Uruguay vigorously supports the strengthening of the framework of international rules established to promote democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights. It is our view that the question of human rights is no longer the exclusive preserve of the domestic jurisdiction of States. For this reason, we also believe that nothing should prevent implementation of the principle of "the responsibility to protect". We fully agree with Member States that have spoken in this forum that in all cases of genocide or other humanitarian catastrophes, collective action may be carried out through the Security Council without the exercise of the veto.

Uruguay, which can support the model (see A/59/L.64) presented by the Group of Four (G-4), without the veto, hopes to continue to collaborate with the necessary flexibility in the next stages of our consideration of these issues, on which we hope that there will be open, direct, inclusive and transparent negotiations.

Mr. Zinsou (Benin) (*spoke in French*): Allow me to express my delegation's considerable admiration for the skill with which you have guided this debate on the reform of the Security Council, which is reaching its final stages.

United Nations reform received decisive impetus at the September 2005 summit, thanks to the renewed commitment of heads of State or Government to increase the effectiveness of that principal instrument of multilateral cooperation, in order to meet the many challenges and threats that humanity is facing. The results that have already been achieved through informal consultations to implement the summit decisions in various critical areas represent for those who contributed to them a real cause to be proud.

In view of the enthusiasm that was demonstrated in achieving progress on those issues, it is rather difficult to understand the deadlock that Security Council reform suffers, given that the need for this reform is seen by us all, and how clear it is that the membership of the Council and its working methods are not well adapted to the geopolitical realities prevailing at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

My delegation appeals to all Member States to work with greater determination to make progress on the reform of the Council in order to give the United Nations the means to better meet its central mission, that of maintaining international peace and security.

Now that passions have cooled, the moment has surely come to undertake a new cycle of inclusive and participatory negotiations in order to find the appropriate solutions to ensure the representativeness and legitimacy of the Council. We must create the best conditions to enhance the authority that it is given by Member States.

Africa, which is the continent that suffers most by the current configuration of the Council, has clearly expressed its legitimate demands. My delegation aligns itself fully with the statement that was made here by the Permanent Representative of Algeria on behalf of the African Group. He faithfully recalled the common position expressed by the heads of State or Government of that continent on the issue of Security Council reform.

The longer we take to achieve enlargement of the Council in both categories of membership, the longer the injustice against Africa will continue, due to the fact that there is no provision for its representation on the Council in the permanent member category. We call upon all Member States to recognize the place that Africa deserves in the United Nations.

In the same spirit, the Republic of Benin reaffirms its support for the candidature of Brazil, Germany, India and Japan for permanent seats in the Council, which would reflect their confirmed desire to assume the responsibilities which go along with their status as great Powers. Their membership would also recognize their clear contribution to promoting international peace and security and to supporting the ideals of our Organization.

My delegation welcomes the progress that the Council has achieved on its own initiative in terms of reforming its working methods. Benin believes that all measures that can be introduced to increase the transparency of the Security Council, as it is now constituted, should be undertaken without delay while awaiting its enlargement.

We pay homage to the Permanent Representative of Japan for having effectively guided the Council's work in this area. My delegation believes that this effort to improve the working methods of the Council should be continued in the light of the proposal set out in draft resolution A/60/L.49, which was submitted by the group of five small nations. These recommendations are extremely relevant.

Given the close link between the working methods and the membership of the Council, it is clear that the working methods should be reviewed as a whole, including with regard to the control of the use of the veto and the adoption of a new rules of procedure once the new membership of the Council has been agreed upon and implemented.

In closing, I would like to repeat the appeal for a new cycle of negotiations on the substantive issues concerning enlargement. The inertia has lasted for too long. It is vital that we end the deadlock surrounding this issue. Let us together wind up the clock of reform in order to give the United Nations a Security Council which is better adapted to effectively meeting the deepest aspirations of our peoples, because it will have become more representative, transparent and effective as it carries out its mission.

Mr. Camilleri (Malta): My delegation welcomes the decision to convene this meeting to take stock of the situation regarding the reform of the Security Council and to consider future action.

We share the analysis of the current situation given by the Permanent Representative of Italy in his capacity as the focal point of the Uniting for Consensus group. The time is right for the Assembly to engage in the type of substantive negotiations on this subject that have eluded it thus far. Rigid national positions need to the give way to an endeavour to identify a collective solution that responds to the shared concerns of the entire United Nations membership and to the imperatives of achieving far-reaching reform in the international system.

Malta approaches the issue of Security Council reform from the perspective of a small Member. Small

countries form a sizable and significant constituency within the United Nations membership. As the representative of Pakistan has pointed out, the perspective of small Member States is often more closely aligned with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations than those of larger States with specific national interests and objectives.

For us, the weaknesses that are eroding the efficacy and legitimacy of the Security Council strike home with particular urgency. We view with very great concern those instances that betray an inability by the Council to respond in a timely and effective manner to emerging security and humanitarian crises. The erosion of legitimacy that affects the Council in instances where its response is either late or ineffective is, for small States more than for larger ones, an erosion of what constitutes the main safeguard of their own security.

Many agree that among the manifestations of the Council's weaknesses are its inadequate accountability to the United Nations membership as a whole, the partial way in which its membership reflects the membership of the United Nations and the sometimes lopsided nature of the criteria it applies in its responses to different situations. A meaningful reform process needs to grapple with those weaknesses in a consolidated manner. It is in that spirit that we share the view of those who maintain that the reform must deal with the dual issues of working methods and membership together, not separately or in sequence.

Accountability is not simply a function of reporting and transparency. It is just as much a function of the method and manner in which the membership is chosen. Timely and effective responses are indeed affected by the availability and abuse of the power of the veto. But they are also affected by the balance and range of representation within the membership of the Council.

In that spirit, while welcoming the action taken by the Council's Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, as recognition of some of the problems that exist, we believe that that action remains inadequate, both in terms of substance as well as of procedure.

On the other hand, we believe that the approach taken by the group of five small States (S-5) is much more effective. The S-5 draft resolution (A/60/L.49) is to be commended for tackling head-on the more critical and sensitive issues, including the question of the veto. At the same time, the S-5 initiative can readily be integrated within the broader process of reform, which, in our view, must inevitably deal also with the question of enlargement.

With regard to enlargement, my delegation is among those that believe that the way forward does not lie in concentrating on the question of permanent membership. Rather, we need to take a more flexible and comprehensive approach to the subject by examining formulas that reaffirm, rather than erode, the principle of rotation. As a small State with limited expectations for membership on the Council, we consider all proposals in terms of the rotation options for membership that they open up to the membership as a whole. We are not convinced by the argument that an increase in the number of permanent members will create more space for the rest of the membership. On the contrary, we see an enlargement that earmarks for permanent membership some, or even most, of the additional seats as a lost opportunity to enhance rotation in both principle and practice. At the same time, we believe that the idea regarding permanent regional seats, as distinct from permanent national seats, if developed further, would offer good scope for accommodating the sometimes contrasting objectives of different members.

At this stage, we need to identify ways to move the negotiations process from its long-standing inertia. One point that seems to have emerged from the current discussion is that, as yet, we do not even have the main elements around which consensus can be built. In that context, the idea has been mentioned that we could explore the idea of pursuing a transitional solution. Combined with the idea of regarding permanent regional seats as distinct from permanent national seats, that could offer a new, and perhaps more productive, avenue for our discussions.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): We have heard the last speaker in this debate on Security Council reform under agenda items 117 and 120.

At this stage, I would like to make three comments.

First, I would like to express my satisfaction and the significant number of speakers in this rich debate: 86 representatives took the floor. That attests to the particular attention that Member States attach to the issue of Security Council reform. Moreover, many

echoed the appeal made by our leaders during the 2005 world summit, namely, that the reform of the Security Council is a central component of the overall reform of the United Nations. Our leaders also expressed the wish that the Council be reformed without delay, so as to make it more broadly representative, efficient and transparent.

Secondly, I would like to underscore the spirit of dialogue that characterized this debate, as well as the relevancy of the views expressed. Nearly all members indicated that the status quo is not a viable option. In particular, speakers emphasized that the reform of the Security Council, which should focus both on expansion and on improving working methods, was crucial to the credibility of the United Nations as a whole, as well as to the strengthening of the authority and legitimacy of the Security Council. In that regard, a real desire emerged from the debate to undertake Security Council reform in a spirit of flexibility, in order to arrive at a solution that can garner the broadest support possible.

Thirdly, as regards following up on the reform of the Security Council, many speakers felt that the time had come for reform of the Security Council to be carried out. I therefore encourage members to continue to try to reach agreement on the various options likely to lead to a follow-up process aiming at the effective reform of the Security Council. In that regard, I call on members to apprise the President of their views, so that we can together succeed in this important aspect of United Nations reform.

The Assembly has thus concluded the current stage of its consideration of agenda items 117 and 120.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.